

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MADRID

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TAGS: SP

SUBJECT: SPAIN GETS FAVORABLE US PRESS

1. THE TENOR OF THE WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL "TOWARD DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN" OF 11-24, TRANSMITTED TO POST BY USIA WIRE, CAPS RECENT FAVORABLE COVERAGE OF SPANISH TRANSITION IN POST AND NEW YORK TIMES. REPORTS FROM SPAIN SINCE CORTES APPROVAL OF REFORM BILL HAVE BEEN MUCH LESS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT SPAIN'S FUTURE AND MUCH MORE WILLING TO CREDIT SUAREZ'S GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY AS WELL AS ITS GOOD INTENTIONS. CORTES APPROVAL OF THE REFORM BILL RATED PAGE ONE COVERAGE IN BOTH NEW YORK TIMES AND POST. MARKHAM IN TIMES FOLLOWED A STRAIGHT FACTUAL REPORT OF THE CORTES ACTION WITH COMMENT THAT STRENGTH OF HARD CORE FRANCOIST RIGHT SEEMED TO BE DISINTEGRATING RAPIDLY AND LEFT OPPOSITION SEEMED INCREASINGLY WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH GOVERNMENT.

2. TIMES EDITORIAL NEXT DAY (11-20) CALLED CORTES VOTE UNCLASSIFIED

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"TREMENDOUS VICTORY" FOR SUAREZ, BUT WARNED IT IS TOO

EARLY " TO SPEAK OF DISMANTLING FRANCO'S LIFE WORK". WHILE GENERALLY ACCEPTING OPPOSITION ARGUMENT THAT SPAIN'S ROUTE TO FREEDOM SHOULD BE WITH PARTICIPATION OF ALL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, TIMES ARGUED REFERENDUM BOYCOTT WOULD BE

UNWISE. 11-22 ANALYTICAL PIECE BY MARKHAM SUGGESTS DEMOCRACY IS INEVITABLE, BUT PROBLEMS REMAIN, ESPECIALLY NEGOTIATING ELECTORAL LAW WITH OPPOSITION. GENERAL TONE IS OPTIMISTIC, "A COUNTRY WHOSE MODERN HISTORY HAS BEEN A SEQUENCE OF UNEDIFYING CONVULSIONS IS MOVING UNDRAMATICALLY TOWARD A FUTURE THAT PROMISES TO BE SHARPLY DIFFERENT FROM THE RECENT PAST".

3. MARKHAM'S PIECE 11-26 ON PSOE CONGRESS SPECULATED THAT GOVERNMENT DID DEAL WITH PSOE TO GET NOVEMBER CONGRESS POSTPONED AND THAT PSOE WILL PROBABLY PARTICIPATE IN SPRING ELECTIONS. ACOPA PIECE IN POST 11-27 ON SUAREZ-SOARES MEETING STATED THAT MEETING WAS CONFIRMATION OF LES-SENEZ MADRID-LISBON TENSIONS AS SPAIN MOVES TOWARD DEMOCRACY AND SPECULATED THAT SOARES MAY HAVE TOLD SUAREZ AT SPANISH SOCIALIST REQUEST LEGALIZATION OF COMMUNISTS ESSENTIAL IF DEMOCRACY TO FLOURISH IN SPAIN.

4. OUR READING IS THAT THE POST AND TIMES ARE NOW GENUINELY IMPRESSED WITH SUAREZ GOVERNMENT. ANY LINGERING PESSIMISM ABOUT SPAIN'S FUTURE SEEMS TO DERIVE NOT FROM DOUBTS ABOUT GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO BRING ABOUT REAL DEMOCRACY, BUT FROM PERCEPTION THAT MAJOR HURDLES STILL LIE AHEAD. ROBINSON

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